

*Old Register One To Nine: The Registers of Assignments and Other Legal Instruments*, State Records New South Wales, Sydney NSW 2008 No ISBN. DVD RRP \$125.00 inc p&h. Available from State Records New South Wales and may be ordered online or an order form can be downloaded. All proceeds from sales go towards the conservation of the old registers.

This DVD was a 2008 Mander Jones Award winner in Category 3A - Best finding aid to an archival collection (1) held by an Australian institution, or (2) about Australia; produced by an organisation deemed eligible for Category 4 (5) (a) institutional membership.

Despite the odd and cumbersome title, this DVD has much to offer anyone researching in New South Wales between 1794 and 1824. *Old Register* is actually nine registers preserved by the NSW Department of Lands and the DVD was created in co-operation with State Records NSW. It contains comprehensive searchable indexes and digitised copies of the registers.

The registers not only contain entries relating to land transactions but also promissory notes, power of attorney entries, leases, mortgages, sales, receipts and payments relating to livestock and crops, apprentice and work agreements, marriage and separation agreements and so on. The range of topics covered means that it provides a very good description of life in early New South Wales and the people living there and carrying out normal day to day activities. There is a very comprehensive article on its use by Marilyn Mason entitled 'The Birth of Our Community: Find Stories of NSW between 1794 and 1824 on a new DVD *Old Register One To Nine*' in *Australian Family Tree Connections* October 2009.

The DVD is not really user friendly and I actually found it a little frustrating to use but it is worth persevering with because the information it contains is so useful and interesting. There are two folders on the DVD – one for the Index and one for the Registers. The Index folder has four PDF files with the information sorted differently in each. The idea is to locate references to what you are researching, note all the references and then go to the second folder and view the actual entries.

Using some of my own family names I searched the four Index PDF files and got different results from each so I would advise to do this although it does take a bit longer. The different arrangements allowed me to locate references to a particular person whose name was spelt in different ways in different entries. In the 'From' index they were grouped almost together which allowed me to pick them up, whereas in the 'To' index they were widely separated.

I managed to find a number of references to the family I was researching, so I then went to the Old Register folder and selected the PDF register files that I wanted, entered the page numbers and the entries came up. The digitisation is of a high standard and easy to read and certainly quicker and cheaper to use than a trip to Sydney.

Given the high cost of the DVD, I would have expected an easier search capability given that the primary users of a DVD like this would be genealogists and family historians. I also suspect that the cost may be a deterrent to more people buying a copy for themselves and it may be that people only use it in libraries, if at all. Given its interest and value for early New South Wales research I believe it should be more widely known and used and hopefully this review will see researchers seek it out.

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